Theatre Survey 57:2 (May 2016)
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doi:10.1017/S004055741600003X

FROM THE EDITOR

If dropped, an egg will break. It will splatter. Anything or anyone nearby will be splashed with yolk and albumen. When I was eleven, I spent one week learning the physics of an egg fall. Releasing eggs from the balcony of my school's auditorium, my classmates and I studied the results of high-velocity impact. One egg at a time. It was messy. It also was prologue to a series of experiments. Over the next few days, we designed and built protective cases using polystyrene foam and duct tape. Returning to the balcony, we threw our now encased eggs over the guardrail. Some containers were obvious failures. Egg goo oozed through Styrofoam cracks and seams. Others had to be opened in order to examine the state of their contents. Boys and girls whose eggs remained intact and free of fractures reveled in their achievement.

Inventions can fascinate a wide and diverse public. Throughout the industrial age, audiences flocked to theatres and lecture halls to watch exhibitions of the latest scientific and technological wonders. Folks gasped when first introduced to the electric light. Spectators were alleged to have fled the moving image of an approaching train projected onto a screen. This issue centers on the inventive spirit of theatre making. It spotlights the popular appeal of new technology onstage, the legacy of a memorable character interpretation, the industrial past of a neighborhood in the midst of gentrification, and the achievements of a group of artists who founded a prominent regional theatre and, in so doing, changed the face of American theatre.

Christopher Grobe focuses on the telephone. He reveals that a long look at the apparatus, particularly its early appearances onstage, can alter the way that we think about the development of modern theatrical culture. Analyzing the "telephone scene"—a theatrical moment onstage or onscreen in which an actor picks up a phone and engages in a conversation that develops the dramatic narrative—Grobe observes that these not only proved to be tremendously popular among audiences but also helped to usher in a new style of acting. In seeking to recreate the tone and manner of an actual telephone conversation, actors needed to develop performances of everyday life that were recognizable to audiences. Part of the thrill of such realistic scenes, as Grobe observes, was "the play of expression on a listener's face."

Aaron Krall offers a close reading of the 1997 Steppenwolf Theatre Company production of Charles Mee's *Time to Burn*. The play, according to Krall, "represents the disenfranchised margins of a postmanufacturing urban economy, in which cities magnetically pull individuals together and dreams confront cruel economic realities." What fascinates the author is that the Chicago-based Steppenwolf not only staged the play in a gentrifying, formerly industrial region of the Windy City but also showed sustained commitment to championing the experiences of working-class individuals. The production created an opportunity

https://doi.org/10.1017/S004055741600003X Published online by Cambridge University Press

for audiences to consider the complicated history of the Clybourn Corridor, the area in which Steppenwolf is located, in addition to considering the haunting legacies of deindustrialized regions and communities across the United States.

Fiona Gregory studies actress Stella "Mrs. Pat" Campbell's performances of the titular wife, Paula Tanqueray, in Arthur Wing Pinero's play *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*. Campbell played the title role for more than thirty years, between 1893 and 1924. Gregory explores both the close association of the actress with the role and how vivid memories of her initial performances "ghosted" her and framed audience and critic expectations for the remainder of her career. She writes, "as [Campbell's] body matured and changed, that of the ghost retained its svelte 1893 proportions and youthful charm, creating a corporeal dissonance that disrupted audience reception." This study of the actress, who began performing the role at its premiere, when she was twenty-eight, provides Gregory with an opportunity to study the haunting legacies of signature performances.

This issue also features a series of articles on East West Players, the influential Los Angeles–based theatre company. Founded in 1965 by Mako, Rae Creevey, Beulah Quo, Soon-Tek Oh, James Hong, Pat Li, June Kim, Guy Lee, and Yet Lock, East West is one of the most significant professional theatres in the United States and has served as a wellspring of new voices in American theatre. East West's distinguished roster of alumni includes David Henry Hwang, Philip Kan Gotanda, Kal Penn, Greg Watanabe, and B. D. Wong, among many others. In articles expanding on presentations first made at the 2015 Association for Asian American Studies conference, Josephine Lee, Christine Mok, Ju Yon Kim, and Elizabeth Son commemorate the company's golden anniversary through a series of engaged, close critical readings of select productions from East West's long history. Lee, who chaired and moderated that AAAS session, offers a short history of East West Players and identifies a common element addressed by Mok, Kim, and Son: East West's "capacity to create a sense of racial community out of disparate panethnic, multigenerational, and diverse experiences." This section on East West Players' fiftieth anniversary is preceded by an interview with David Henry Hwang, in which the Tony Award–winning playwright and I discuss his long association with East West and his perspective on the contemporary evolution of Asian American theatre.

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